THE

DEAN of St. *PAUL's* SERMON

Before the

LORD MAYOR,

At St. *Bridget's*-Church on *Easter-Tuesday*. 1697.

Clarke Mayor.

Martis xiij. die Aprilis 1697. *Annoque Regni Regis Willhelmi Tertij, Angliæ, &c. Nono.*

THis Court doth Desire Mr. Dean of St. *Paul's* to Print his Sermon, Preached at the Parish-Church of St. *Bridget*, on *Tuesday* in *Easter*-Week last, before the Lord-Mayor, Aldermen, and Governors of the several Hospitals of this City.

GOODFELLOW.

The Nature and Measure of Charity.

A SERMON

Preach'd before the Right Honourable the

LORD MAYOR,

AND THE

Court of Aldermen,

AT THE

Parish-Church of St. *BRIDGET*,

ON

Tuesday in *Easter*-Week, *April* 6. MDCXCVII.

By WILLIAM SHERLOCK, D. D. Dean of St. *Paul*'s, Master of the *Temple*, and Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

LONDON:

Printed for W. Rogers, at the *Sun* against St. *Dunstan*'s Church in *Fleetstreet*. MDCXCVII.

2 Cor. viii. 12.

For if there be firſt a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.

THE Occaſion of theſe Words was this. The Chriſtians of *Judæa* were at this time in great Want, by reaſon of a general Dearth, which was foretold by *Agabus* at *Antioch*, *Acts* 11. 28. *And there ſtood up one of them named Agabus, and ſignified by the ſpirit, That there ſhould be great dearth throughout all the world, which came to paſs in the days of Claudius Cæſar.* Upon this Notice, *the Diſciples, every man according to his ability, determined to ſend relief unto the Brethrem which dwelt in Judæa.*

This is that Contribution for the Saints which St. *Paul* directs them about, at the Concluſion of his firſt Epiſtle to them, Ch. 16. and this is what he inculcates on them in this and the following

Chapter, but with ſo much Art and Inſinuation, that though he uſes the moſt powerful Arguments, yet he would not ſeem to perſuade, nor to think that they needed any Perſuaſion; for it is not Honourable for Chriſtians, whoſe Religion is Charity, to need ſuch Perſuaſions and Importunities. They may be directed in their Charity, and put in Mind of ſuch particular Charities, as are of the greateſt Neceſſity, or the moſt preſent uſe, or have the moſt general Influence, or do the greateſt Reputation and Service to Religion; or their Charity may be heightened, inflamed, and enlarged, by the Proper Arguments and Motives of Liberality; but their Religion teaches them to be Charitable, and the Name and Profeſſion of a Chriſtian is a Reproach to them without it: And this is all the Apoſtle aims at even in his ſoft and tender way of Perſuaſion; not merely to perſuade them to contribute to the Neceſſities of the Saints, which he knew they were willing to do; but that they ſhould contribute liberally, with a free and chearful Heart, and open Hand; which is the ſum of all his Arguments, as I ſhall ſhew you in the Concluſion, if Time permit.

But

But the great Difficulty concerns the proper Meaſures of a liberal and overflowing Charity. Our Saviour has preſcribed no ſet Bounds and Proportions to our Charity; and it is thought as poſſible to be imprudent and exceſſive, as too frugal and ſparing: We have many other Obligations upon us beſides CHARITY; to provide for our own comfortable Subſiſtence, to take Care of our Wives and Children, and to diſcharge all other Duties and Offices according to our Station and Character in the World: All which ought to ſet Bounds to our Charity. But what theſe Bounds are, is thought the great Queſtion, which is not eaſily anſwered: This is true; nor can any certain Meaſures be preſcribed; nor does the Apoſtle pretend to it: But though there is a great Latitude in true Chriſtian Charity, which does not conſiſt in a Point, but admits of different Degrees and Proportions; yet the Apoſtle, in my Text, directs us to ſuch a Principle, as is much better and ſafer than any ſtated Rules, becauſe it will be ſure never to ſink below the juſt Proportions of Charity; and will render all we do, be it more or leſs, very acceptable to

God. *For if there be firſt a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.*

In which Words, I ſhall obſerve Three Things, which are expreſſed, or neceſſarily implied in them. *Firſt*, That a great Readineſs and Forwardneſs of Mind, to do Good, is the true Spirit of Charity; which gives Value and Acceptation to all we do. *Secondly*, That this Readineſs of Mind to do Good, to Relieve the Neceſſities of thoſe who want, will obſerve the juſt Proportions of Giving, will give *according to what a man hath* : as is neceſſarily implied in the Words; for if a willing Mind be accepted, according to what a man hath, it is, becauſe it gives according to what a man hath. *Thirdly*, That where there is this Willing Mind, with a fitting Proportion according to our Abilities, whether it be more or leſs, which we give, it is equally acceptable to God. Such a Man *is accepted according to what he hath, not according to what he hath not.* I ſhall ſpeak as briefly as I can to each of theſe, that I may not be prevented in ſuch an Application, as is proper to this Solemnity.

Firſt,

First, That a great Readiness and Forwardness of Mind (for so προθυμία signifies) to do Good, to relieve the Necessities of those in Want, is the true Spirit of Charity, and gives Value and Acceptation to all we do. Such a Willingness of Mind, when πρόκειται, it is the Principle and first Mover in all our Charitable Actions, is ὑπρόσδεκτος very acceptable to God.

This, I think, I may take for granted; for what is the Grace and Vertue of Charity, but a Charitable Inclination, Disposition, Temper, Habit of Mind? And what is this but a Readiness and Forwardness to do Good? Our Inclinations and Passions are the Principles of Action, and therefore have a natural Tendency towards their proper Acts and Objects, and will act when they have the Power and Opportunity of Action: Charity is Love, the Love of Pity and Compassion to the Miseries and Sufferings, and Wants of our Brethren; and Love in all other Instances is a very restless active Principle; and so will our Love to the Poor and Miserable be, if it be Inclination and Habit.

There

There is no man but will pretend to be very ready and willing to do Good, though he never does any: For to have no Inclination to do Good, is so Infamous, that those who do no good, are ashamed to own it; but to do no good, is a Plain Evidence against them, when nothing can hinder them from doing Good, but the want of Will and Inclination to do it; when God has furnished them with the means of doing Good, and there are thousands of Objects to exercise their Charity, and to move their Pity, if they had any. The Will is accepted for the Deed, both by God and Men, when it is not in our Power to do that Good which we sincerely desire to do, and which we would certainly do, were it in our Power; but it is to mock both God and Men, to pretend a Willingness, when it is visible to all the World, That a Will to do Good is the only thing we want. But such a Readiness and Willingness of Mind as is Active and Vigorous, as contrives and lays Designs of Charity, or embraces such as are offered, and takes all wise Opportunities of doing Good, this is very acceptable to God, as being the most Divine and God-like Temper, the Image of his own Goodness, and the noblest Exercise of our

our Love to Men, inſpired with the Love of God. Now in Moral Actions it is the Principle that gives the Value; not ſo much the Gift, as the Mind of the Giver; and therefore St. *Paul* tells us, That though *we give all our goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, we are nothing.* 1 *Cor.* 13. 3. God can feed the poor without us, if he ſo pleaſes; but as for ſeveral other wiſe ends of Providence, ſo he has ordered, That *the poor ſhall be always with us* for the trial and exerciſe of our Virtue, but the Virtue is not the Gift, but the Charity. And could we perform all the Acts of Charity without a charitable Mind, the World might be better for it, but not we our ſelves.

2*dly.* This readineſs and forwardneſs of Mind to do good will obſerve the juſt proportions of Charity, will give *according to what a man hath.* I obſerved before, That our Saviour in his Goſpel hath preſcribed no fixt Meaſures nor Proportions of Charity: Nor could he reaſonably do this, conſidering the nature of Charity; which though it be not ſo abſolutely free, that we may chuſe whether we will be charitable or no (for charitable we muſt be at the peril of our Souls); yet the proportions muſt be free, or it is not Charity, but a Poors rate, as all the poſitive Laws, which God gave

gave the *Jews* for the relief of the Poor, were no better; and therefore, by the wiser *Jews*, were never placed to the account of Charity, but of Justice, and a Legal Righteousness: Which is the very distinction St. *Paul* makes between a *righteous* and a *good man*, Rom. 5. 7. *But scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man one would even dare to die. A Righteous man* is one, who is legally Righteous, and observes what the Law requires; but a Good man is one who is acted by a free, unconfined and generous Goodness.

Now upon this pretence, That there is no proportion assigned to Charity, there are too many, who content themselves with very little, indeed with nothing which can properly be called Charity. But I wonder in the mean time what these men make of all those Commands and Exhortations which we find in the Gospel to Charity, which are so many, so pressing and importunate, and bound on us by so many promises of present and future Rewards, and with so many terrible Threatnings denounced against the uncharitable, that surely they must mean something; and as willing as men are in these Cases, to pretend Ignorance, I believe there are

few

few men living, but know in ſome meaſure what Charity means: And though they may diſpute how much they ought to give, yet certainly know, that they ought to give; and that to give nothing, or what is next to nothing, all Circumſtances conſidered, is not Charity.

A Charitable Temper and Diſpoſition of Mind is an indiſpenſible Duty, and the moſt Eſſential Part of the Chriſtian Religion. This our Saviour commands; and he need command no more, for Charity is and will be a Rule and Meaſure to it ſelf. Where this Divine Principle is, it will teach us when, and how, and in what Proportion to give: The Sun needs no Rules and Directions how to communicate its Light and Heat. Nature is the ſureſt and moſt infallible Rule, and Law to it ſelf; and thus it is proportionably in Moral as well as in Natural Agents. For what is the immediate effect of Nature and Life, can never be taught without its Principle; cannot exceed its Principle, and cannot fall below it. All the Rules in the World can never teach that man Charity, who wants the Principle; a Charitable Mind needs no Rules, but turns naturally on its own Byas; which will direct its Motions right.

There is a great difference indeed between Natural and Moral Agents. Natural Agents are necessarily determined to some one End, and therefore have but one Principle, which uniformly and steddily pursues the Ends of Nature; but Moral Agents, as they act freely, so they have many different Principles, Inclinations, and Passions, which stint and limit each other; that none of them can act to their utmost Vigour, but as they are mutually poized and ballanced: And this is the Work of Reason and Religion, to put them into their Natural Order, and to set just Bounds to them; and that proportions the degrees of their Activity and Strength; but yet every Principle, unless violently oppressed, will act according to its Nature, as it more or less prevails. And this gives Measures and Proportions to all our Actions; as to shew you this in our present Case.

Charity is that Love to Mankind which makes us pity all their Wants and Sufferings, and inspires us with a great Zeal and Concernment to Help and Relieve them. If you enquire, What the Natural Measure of this Charity is? I know no other Natual Measure, but its Natural End, that is, To relieve all that suffer and are in want; for that is what Charity

rity would do, and what all Charitable Men heartily wish that they could do. Well! but this is impossible, for there are too many miserable People for any man to Relieve them all. This is true, and Want of Power must of Necessity set Bounds to our Charity; but since we cannot Relieve all, we must relieve such as we can; and wisely consider where the greatest Necessities, and greatest Obligations are: Which will give the Preference to Christians before Infidels; to Good Men before the Wicked; to God's Poor, whom the Divine Providence has made Poor, to the Poor of their own Making, whom Idleness, Luxury, and Vice have made Poor and Miserable. Well! But how far must we Relieve these Poor? Must we give as long as we have any thing to give, and make our selves the Objects of Charity? By no means! There are other as Natural Principles as Charity, which must set Bounds to it. Self-Love is a Natural and Necessary Principle; no man is bound to love any man better than himself: To love our Neighbour as our selves, is all that the Gospel it self makes our necessary Duty; though some Great and Generous Friendships, and Divine Charities, may go further,

as far as concerns this Life. Next to Self-Love, our Natural Affection for our Wives and Children muſt take place, as ingrafted in it, and thought the Beſt and the Deareſt Part of it, as being neareſt to our ſelves, and what the beſt men are the moſt tenderly concerned for. And this is the chief thing, which among men of any Principles, diſputes the Bounds of Charity: For as for thoſe ſtupid Brutes, who love Money only to look on, or to count their Bags and Securities, without ſuffering themſelves, or any Body elſe, to uſe it, they are not fit to be named: For I can hardly reckon them among reaſonable Creatures. But men's Care of themſelves, and of their Wives and Children (not to deſcend at preſent to other Relations, which may come within the compaſs of Charity, though of a nearer and more ſacred Obligation) is thought a very Prudent and Reaſonable Conſideration in this Caſe, and indeed is ſo; for there is a great deal of Truth and Reaſon in that common Saying, rightly underſtood, That *Charity begins at Home*.

The great Controverſy then is between our Love to our Selves, our Wives and Children, and Charity to the Poor. Now there is no Diſpute, but the firſt muſt have the Preference; but yet Charity to the Poor muſt have its Place alſo.

And

And then the only Question is, In what Proportion this must be? And that is a very hard Question, if you put it in Arithmetick, for I can name no Proportion; nor has our Saviour thought fit to name any: But, as I observed to you before, True Charity will assign a just Proportion to it self: For a true Charitable Mind will spare what it reasonably can, and never below the Proportion of Charity; and will spare more or less, according to the Degrees of its Charity. I must be forced to represent this in short to you, that I may not be tedious.

That Love we have for our selves, and for our Natural Dependents, will generally secure us against exceeding the Proportions of Charity, that there is seldom any Danger on that side. On the other hand, if we have a true Charitable Mind, and a sincere Compassion for the Sufferings of others, we shall certainly do what we our selves, considering our Circumstances, and what all Charitable men who know our Circumstances, will call Charity. But then, the more Intense and Fervent our Charity is, this will still increase the Proportion, and sometimes to such Heights, as can hardly escape the Censure of Affectation and Folly: And were it not for the Interposition of the Divine Providence, might sometimes prove very fatal to themselves

ſelves and their Families. As to give you the Account of this in ſhort; There are Two things abſolutely neceſſary to diſpoſe men to Give Liberally: A juſt Senſe of the Miſeries of others; and a true Judgment of our own Abilities.

As for the Firſt:

A Charitable Mind is very eaſy to receive the impreſſions of Charity; and the more charitably it is diſpoſed, ſtill the more eaſy. Every pitiable Object moves and affects ſuch men, and they are no more able to reſiſt the Silent Oratory of meager Looks, naked Backs, and hungry Bellies (were they not ſometimes harden'd by Cheats and Vagabonds) than to deny themſelves what is neceſſary to Life: Much leſs can they deny any known and unqueſtioned Charity; for ſince Charitable they are, and Acts of Charity they will do, they are very glad to know how to diſpoſe of their Charity, to do that Good which they intend by it. A Soft and tender Mind, which feels the Sufferings of others, and ſuffers with them, is the true Temper and Spirit of Charity; and Nature prompts us to eaſe thoſe Sufferings, which we feel: This makes us ſo ready to ſupply our own Wants, becauſe we have a quick and ſmart Senſe of them; and the Chriſtian Sympathy and fellow-feeling of Charity, will proportionably incline us to relieve our ſuffering Bre-

Brethren, when we feel in our ſelves what it is they ſuffer. An inward Principle is more powerful than all external Arguments; and Senſe and Feeling is this Principle; and Charity is this Senſe.

Thus, as for Proportions, a Charitable Mind ſets no other Bounds to its Charity, but only Ability; that the only Queſtion is, Whether we can ſpare any thing from our ſelves and Families? and what we can ſpare? Now when Charity is the Judge of this, it is always a favourable Judge on the ſide of the Poor and Miſerable, and always the more favourable Judge, the greater the Charity is: It will teach us to think, That we want leſs, and conſequently can ſpare more, when we conſider how much others want: At leaſt it will teach us to abate of what we do not want; of all Idle and Superfluous Expences; of all needleſs Pomp and Ceremony, which is more than our Station and Character requires; and it is incredible to think what an inexhauſted Fund this would be for Charity: Did we truly eſtimate our own Wants, rectifie our Expences, and ſet juſt Bounds to our Deſires, many of us would ſoon find, that we have a great deal to ſpare: And nothing will ſo effectually do this, as Charity; and therefore Charity is the beſt Rule and Meaſure to it ſelf. So that there is no great occaſion to diſpute Proportions; let us learn

to

to be Charitable, and Charity will teach us what to give. Every man can tell when another is Charitable; and a Charitable man man can tell when he himſelf is ſo; and as our Charity increaſes, ſo we ſhall abound in the Fruits of Charity; for the more we love, the more liberally we ſhall give.

This is not to leave what we will give to Charitable Uſes, to our own free Choice, as a Trial of our Ingenuity, as ſome repreſent it: For had this been the Caſe, there ſhould have been ſome Proportion fixt, leſs than which we ſhould not give, though we might give as much more as we pleaſed; for otherwiſe nothing is matter of ſtrict Duty, but all is left to Ingenuity; which is ſo far from being true, that there is not a more neceſſary Duty in all Religion than Charity; and even the greateſt Degrees and Heights of Charity, are all Duty: For we are commanded to be Charitable, and to aim at the higheſt Degrees of Charity; and the Proportion of giving is referred to the Principle, and included in the Degrees of Charity; ſuch a Proportion as ſuch a Degree of Charity will give, is as much a ſtrict Duty as ſuch a Degree of Charity is.

The

The very nature of Charity proves that thus it is, and that it can't be otherwise. For meerly to give, or not to give; to give more or less, is no certain proof of a charitable, or uncharitable Man; how liberally soever we give, we are not charitable, unless we give from a principle of Charity, and our Charity be as great as our Gift. So that had God prescribed how much every Man must give to the Poor, they might have observed this proportion of Giving without any Charity, and then such Gifts as these had been no acts of Charity, when the Gift and the Charity was parted: But a charitable Man will give, and will give in proportion to the degrees of his Charity, and therefore Charity; and the encrease of Charity is the only proper object of Command; for he will give liberally, who loves much; and the proportion of giving is commanded in the degrees of Charity, which alone can prescribe, and will observe a just proportion.

Let no man then inquire, how much he must give; the proper inquiry is, how much he must love. Let no man satisfie himself with some small trifling presents, which bear no proportion to what he has, upon presence that God has prescribed no proportion of giving; but let him ask himself, Whether, in his own Conscience, what he gives,

bears any proportion to that love and charity to the poor and miserable, which God requires: and let him remember, that though God has not fixt the proportions of giving, he requires great degrees of Charity; and though Men may give liberally without Charity, yet not to give in some due proportion, is a certain sign of want of Charity, when there wants no ability to give.

Give me leave to observe by the way, that what I have now said of Charity, is true of all other Christian Graces and Vertues; that it is the principle, which both must and will give laws and measures to the external acts of such Graces and Vertues: As to instance at present only in the Acts of religious worship, the measures and proportions of which are as much disputed, and no more determined and limited by the laws of our Saviour, than those of Charity: We are commanded to fast, and pray, and to communicate at the Lord's Table, and to read and meditate on the Holy Scriptures, and such other acts of Religion; but we are not told, how often we must fast and pray and receive the Lord's Supper, nor how much time we must spend in our publick or private Devotions; or though all the publick Exercise of Religion must be regulated by the publick Authority of the Church; which as to time and

place,

place, and other external circumstances, is the safest rule; yet our private Devotions are free, and both publick and private Devotions have a great latitude; and thus as it is in the case of Charity, some men think, they can never spend time enough in the publick and private Exercises of Religion; and others think a very little will serve the turn, and any trifling pretence is sufficient to excuse them from their Closets, or the Church, and especially from the Lord's Table.

And the resolution of this is the same, as in the case of Charity; We are commanded to be devout Worshippers of God, and the true spirit of Devotion naturally prescribes the external measures and proportions. Devout minds, who have a true sense of God, and of their constant dependence on him; That they owe all temporal and spiritual Blessings to him, and daily need the pardon of their Sins, the protection of his Providence, and the supplies of his Grace, will never fail to worship God, whom they inwardly reverence and adore; and as our devout sense of God encreases in strength and vigour, the external expressions of devotion will be more frequent, more lively and affecting; for nature will exert it self, and will exert it self in proportion to its strength and vigour. But to return.

3. The third thing I proposed, I must at present wave; that where there is a willing mind, with a fit proportion, according to our abilities, (which, as you have heard, there will be, where there is a truly willing and charitable mind) whether it be more or less, that we give, it is equally acceptable to God. Such a man is accepted according to what he hath, not according to what he hath not: and indeed there is no great occasion to insist on it; for it is self-evident, that God will not exact that from us, which we have not.

Only we must observe, that this does not excuse any man from Charity, though he have nothing to give; he must have a willing charitable mind to make him accepted; nor does it excuse those from Charity, who have but little to give, for they must give according to what they have: nor does it excuse those, who have nothing to give, from other acts of Charity, which require the giving nothing, and a great many such acts of real Charity there are, which poor people may do for each other, though they have not a penny in their purse.

But it is time now to turn my Discourse to the proper business of this great Solemnity. Publick Charities are always reckoned amongst the greatest Ornaments of any Country, and make up the most lovely

lovely and charming part of their Characters: Stately and magnificent Buildings shew great art, and great riches, and a gallant and noble genius, but great Charities have something divine, and strike the mind with a religious veneration. There may be much more magnificent shows, than this day's procession, but none which affect wise and good men with a sincerer pleasure: To follow a great number of Orphans, in the mean, but decent Dress of Charity, singing the praises of God, and praying for their Benefactors, is beyond all the *Roman* Triumphs, however adorned with a pompous equipage, and great numbers of royal slaves.

These present us with nothing but the miserable spectacles of spoil and rapine, the uncertain changes and vicissitudes of fortune, the lamentable fate of conquered Princes and People, and the pride and insolence of Conquerors; but here are the triumphs of a generous Goodness and divine Charity, triumphs without blood and spoil, without slaves, and captives, unless redeemed slaves, rescued from the jaws of poverty, and all the injuries and miseries of a ruined fortune: that to me this great City, and this honourable Train, never looks greater than in this humble pomp. A pomp not for vanity and ostentation, but to endear and recommend

commend Charity, by shewing the visible and blessed fruits of it: and to the same end, I must give you an account of the present state of these publick Charities.

The REPORT was here Read.

THat these are all great Charities, I need not tell you; indeed all so great, that it is hard to know, to which to give the preference, and what occasion all these Charities have of fresh, liberal, and constant supplies, *the Report* acquaints you.

But I cannot pass over one thing I observe in *this Report*, and which, I fear, many necessitous people feel, that there have been no *Orphans* taken into *Christ's Hospital* this Year, nor, as I remember, for two Years last past. I do not mention this by way of reflexion, as any fault in the administration and government, but to put you in mind, how much that excellent foundation needs your supply; and though I do not love to compare Charities, they being all of great use and necessity in their kind, yet I think this foundation has something to plead for it self beyond any other.

A help-

A helpless age, destitute of friends, and all means of support will plead for it self without saying any thing: it is a pitiable sight to see poor innocent Children turned helpless into the wide World to starve, or beg, or steal, or to suffer all imaginable difficulties and necessities at home: without education, without government or discipline, without being used to labour, or taught any honest way of living; which, as they grow up, improves into a habit of idleness, and that betrays them to all degrees and kinds of wickedness, trains them up to the Gallows, or fills our other Hospitals with vagrant and miserable people.

There is nothing, which all wise Commonwealths have been more concerned for, than the education of Children, which proves a great support, and gives great ease and security to any government, by breeding up usefull members of it: So that this is a Charity, which would in a great measure make some other Charities less needfull; and it is certainly a greater Charity to prevent the miseries of mankind, than to relieve them.

This is a Charity, wherein every member of this great City, is most nearly concerned, because they and no others have a right to it. It is a provision

vision for their posterity, against all the sudden strokes of fortune, which no man can be secured from; Here it is, that families, which are unexpectedly ruined by the uncertain chances of trade may be raised again by Charity; at least, by that vertue and industry, which their education teaches them, and those fair advantages, with which according to their several capacities they are placed in the world; they have a new opportunity given them of trying a better fortune, or rather, a more propitious providence. So that every Citizen is concerned to promote and enlarge this Charity, because no man knows who shall want it, if not for his Children, yet for his Grand-children, or remoter descendents; and possibly to men, who are sensible of the uncertain changes of the World, and have a religious reverence for the divine providence, it would be no mean argument to promote this Charity, were care taken, that the Descendents of Benefactors, if ever they should want this Charity, should certainly have it.

It is certainly for the honour of this great City to make the best provision it can for the Children of unfortunate Citizens; and those on whom providence has smiled, while they have seen their Neighbours shipwrackt by such unaviodable accidents,

as

as no prudence or conduct could escape, cannot make a more proper acknowledgment of the divine goodness than this.

I shall add but one thing more of this nature. This is the only Charity, which is most likely to raise a fund of Charity: Among such great numbers, as have their education in this place, there have been, and we may reasonably hope there always will be, not a few, who will raise their fortunes in the World, and remember, their beginning was Charity. I'm sure, such men ought to do so, and then such an Hospital as this, may help to support and enlarge it self, and in time raise new Hospitals, for new Colonies of Charity.

But while I plead for *Christ's Hospital*, I would not be thought to divert the whole current of Charity into this one channel; as things now are, there is absolute necessity of other Charities: the sick, diseased, and maimed, are great objects of Charity, especially Souldiers and Sea-men, who venture their lives, and lose their health and their limbs in the service of their Country, to defend our fortunes, liberties, lives, and religion. There is none of us, but would think it a very poor recompence for the loss of health and limbs to be cured upon Charity;

it is certainly the least that we can do for them; so very little, that if it be charity to do it, it is barbarity to deny it, and that is but a very small degree of charity, which is but one remove from barbarity itself.

As for other sick, and diseased, and lame people, who cannot be at the charge of a Cure, where sickness, disability, and poverty meet, this makes them double objects of charity, especially, as it often happens, when these disabilities fall upon the industrious, who before supported themselves and their families by honest labours, without charity.

Nay as for those, who may be justly thought the least objects of charity, the wicked and vicious, who reap the deserved fruits of their own wickedness, I am sure, they are the objects of the greatest pity, because this life will not end their miseries; and if we can prolong their lives here to save their souls, it will be charity indeed, and what effect the sense of their wickedness and sufferings, and the Grace of God, may have upon them, no man can tell.

As for distracted Persons, I believe, no man, who considers, what a blessing reason and understanding is, and what a misery the want of it is, can think

of

of them without the most sensible compassion: I think, all other evils whatsoever, are to be preferred before it; and therefore to restore them to their senses again, which we hear by the blessing of God is often done, or however to keep them from doing themselves, or others any injury, and to preserve human nature from that contempt, which such publick spectacles expose it to, is a very extraordinary Charity.

Now all this shews, that a charitable man need not be at any great loss, how to dispose of his Charity; here are too many very proper objects of Charity, (if God so pleased) and we ought to be very thankfull to God, that we our selves are not in the number, for *it is more blessed to give, than to receive.*

But then the great numbers of miserable people, who in several kinds want our Charity, is a very powerfull argument to greater liberality and bounty. For this I must add to what I have already said concerning the measures and proportions of Charity; that a truly charitable mind will encrease its proportions according to present wants; will sometimes abridge it self even in the conveniences of life to supply great and pressing necessities; for a great love will not only spare, what

it easily can, but when there is great reason for it, will deny it self to do good.

And here I intended to have represented to you our Apostles arguments for a liberal and bountifull Charity: but, I fear, I have already too much trespassed; and where there is a willing mind, so many and so great objects of Charity, are themselves very pressing arguments. And therefore as the Apostle endeavours to inspire his *Corinthians* with an holy Emulation of the zeal and forwardness of the Churches of *Macedonia*, *how that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy, and their deep poverty, abounded unto the riches of their liberality*; so I shall only desire you to emulate the great Examples of past and present times, and that you would set as great Examples for times to come. If any thing deserves our emulation, great and generous Charities do, which are a resemblance and imitation of the divine goodness, than which nothing can more endear us to God or Man; We owe all our present foundations to Royal Bounty and private Charities; and thanks be to God, our present age, as bad as it is, is not without some great Examples; and though true virtue is void of the pride,

pride, and vanity, and envy, and jealousies of earthly Rivals, yet it fires at great Examples, and is ashamed to be out-done by Equals in love to God or Men; Especially when the honour of the Church, whereof they are members, and the Religion, which they profess, is concerned.

It is well known, how many pious and charitable foundations are owing to Popish superstition; they hoped to expiate their sins, and to merit heaven by their good works, and in this hope, and this perswasion, they did a very great many. We understand better than to think of meriting any thing of God, much less of purchasing a liberty of sinning, by Acts of Charity; but if those great rewards, which are promised to Charity, and which we profess to believe, will not make us charitable, without the opinion of merit and satisfaction; Charity is so great and excellent a vertue, and so very usefull to mankind, that at least thus far Popery will be thought the better Religion; and therefore as the Apostle argues, *As ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also*: As we have a more orthodox faith,

faith, a clearer and distincter knowledge, and a purer worship, than the Church of *Rome*, let us excell in Charity too, and convince the World, that to renounce Popery, is not to renounce good works.

FINIS

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